

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03  
    INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03  
    SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 OES-07 AGRE-00 DODE-00  
    PM-05 H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SS-15 DOTE-00  
    CEA-01 STR-06 /100 W  
    -----015709 141716Z /45

R 141031Z JAN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2709  
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE  
AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST  
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST  
AMCONSUL KRAKOW POUCH  
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMCONSUL POZNAN POUCH  
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE  
AMEMBASSY SOFIA  
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 WARSAW 0375

EO 11652: GDS  
TAGS: ETRD ECON ENRG EGEN PL COMECON  
SUBJ: POLAND'S ECONOMIC MORASS: WHISTLING AS THE DARKNESS  
DEEPENS

1. SUMMARY AND COMMENT: A RECENT TWO-DAY SESSION OF  
THE POLISH COMMUNIST PARTY'S SECOND NATIONAL CONFERENCE  
HAS FAILED TO COME UP WITH ANY SOLUTIONS OR POSITIVE, REMEDIAL  
ACTION FOR POLAND'S PERVASIVE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. IN-  
STEAD, THE CONFERENCE HAS FURTHER UNDERLINED THE INABILITY OR  
UNWILLINGNESS OF THE POLISH LEADERSHIP TO GRAPPLE WITH  
THE MAJOR ISSUES: PRICES, WAGES, BAD MANAGEMENT, AND A  
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LONG LIST OF SPECIFIC BUREAUCRATIC EVILS AND PROBLEMS. MANY  
OF THESE ARE ENDEMIC IN SOCIALIST ECONOMIC SYSTEMS BUT  
HAVE BEEN INTENSIFIED IN POLAND AS A RESULT OF AGRI-  
CULTURAL FAILURES AND RUNAWAY INVESTMENT PROGRAMS. THE  
POLISH GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, APPARENTLY INTENDS TO CON-  
TINUE PLODDING FORWARD ALONG THE SAME COURSE IT HAS  
FOLLOWED OVER THE PAST SEVEN YEARS. PRICES WILL REMAIN

FROZEN AT 1971 LEVELS. INCOMES, WHICH ACCORDING TO PARTU SECRETARY GIEREK JUMPED BY A VIGOROUS 26 PERCENT DURING 1976 AND 1977, WILL CONTINUE TO RISE. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC MANEUVER - MORE CONSUMER GOODS, A BETTER STANDARD OF LIVING - WILL CONTINUE PARAMOUNT.

2. THE LONG-AWAITED FINDINGS BY FIVE SPECIAL WORKING GROUPS, ESTABLISHED AFTER THE DISORDERS OF MID-1976 TO ANALYZE THE MOST SERIOUS PROBLEMS OF THE ECONOMY, SUCH AS HOUSING AND THE WAGE-PRICE DISPARITY, WERE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL. AT THE SAME TIME, THE CONFERENCE'S PROCEEDINGS, AND ESPECIALLY A LONG, STRIKINGLY INEFFECTIVE SPEECH BY GIEREK, WERE AMAZINGLY FRANK IN SAYING WHAT IS WRONG, FOR EXAMPLE, HOUSING AND FOOD SHORTAGES, INADEQUATE TRANSPORT, WASTE OF ENERGY AND RAW MATERIALS, BAD LABOR DISCIPLINE, AND OVER-STAFFING. AND, PERHAPS WORST OF ALL, SKYROCKETING COSTS OF GOVERNMENTAL SUBSIDIES TO MAINTAIN LOW PRICES FOR FOOD AND OTHER STAPLES, A STEADILY INCREASING DRAIN ON THE NATIONAL INCOME. THE ONLY POSSIBLE SOLUTION ON THE HORIZON, AND ONE WHICH WAS REPEATEDLY STRESSED BY GIEREK, IS INCREASED LABOR PRODUCTIVITY. THIS SEEMS AN IMPROBABLY WAY OUT, GIVEN THE PERFORMANCE OF POLISH LABOR TO DATE IN THE FACE OF THE VERY LIMITED INCENTIVES AVAILABLE ON THE DOMESTIC MARKET.

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3. IT IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT HOW LONG THIS POLICY OF ECONOMIC WAFFLING CAN CONTINUE. VERY POSSIBLY GIEREK AND COMPANY HAVE NO CLEAR IDEA THEMSELVES, BUT MERELY HOPE TO DRAG ON MONTH BY MONTH, OR EVEN YEAR BY YEAR, BOLSTERED BY AID AND CREDITS FROM THE EAST AND FROM THE WEST, AND HOPING FOR BETTER HARVESTS THAN IN THE PAST FOUR YEARS. PERHAPS THEIR FINEST HOPE OF ALL IS THAT THE DAY MAY COME WHEN THEY WILL ACTUALLY BE ABLE TO GET UP ENOUGH NERVE TO BEGIN RAISING PRICES, IF ONLY BY TWO OR THREE PERCENT. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

4. THE FOLLOWING ARE THE MAIN ECONOMIC POINTS WHICH THE EMBASSY HAS NOTED IN AN ANALYSIS OF THE SPEECHES AND DOCUMENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED IN THE POLISH PRESS ON THE OCCASION OF THE SECOND NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE POLISH COMMUNIST PARTY (PZPR) WHICH MET IN WARSAW JANUARY 9-10. WE DEAL WITH GIEREK'S MAJOR SPEECH TO THE PARTY IN SUBSEQUENT PARAGRAPHS.

(A) THERE IS RIGID ADHERENCE TO THE TERMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE GIEREK REGIME'S "ECONOMIC MANUEVER." THIS

PROGRAM, SET UP SEVEN YEARS AGO AFTER THE FALL  
OF GOMULKA, STRESSES BETTER LIVING STANDARDS  
OVER DEVELOPMENT OF HEAVY INDUSTRY. THERE IS CONTINUED  
EMPHASIS ON THE  
IMPORTANCE OF MORE AND BETTER QUALITY CONSUMER GOODS,  
THE IMPROVEMENT OF EVERYDAY LIFE THROUGH BETTER HOUSING,  
SHORTER WORKING HOURS, IMPROVED SOCIAL SERVICES, AND

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 WARSAW 0375

RESTRICTIONS ON INVESTMENT IN AREAS WHICH DO NOT CONTRI-  
BUTE TO THESE OBJECTIVES. INTERESTINGLY, THIS STRESS CONTINUES  
DESPITE OPEN ADMISSION OF THE PROBLEMS IT HAS  
CAUSED PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE PROVEN TO BE POLITICALLY  
DANGEROUS FOR EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES ALLIED WITH THE  
USSR. GIEREK NOTES, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT ACQUISITION OF  
INCREASED SUPPLIES OF CONSUMER GOODS GENERATES DEMAND  
FOR MORE CONSUMER GOODS. (EUREKA\*) THERE IS A SNOWBALLING EFFECT.  
MORE APARTMENTS GIEREK ADMITS, GENERATE DEMANDS FOR MORE FURNITURE.  
AND THERE IS REAL DANGER OF "COPYING THE CONSUMPTION

PATTERNS OF CAPITALIST SOCIETIES WHERE THE TRANSFORMATION OF MATERIAL GOODS INTO STATUS SYMBOLS LEADS TO  
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EXTREME FRUSTRATION AND . . . THE WASTE OF RESOURCES."  
THERE IS ALSO, HE IMPLIES, A GROWING DANGER OF "EXCESSIVE  
DIFFERENCES IN LIVING CONDITIONS."

(B) THERE WILL BE NO INCREASES OF PRICES AT THIS TIME,  
NOR IS THERE ANY MENTION OF FUTURE INCREASES. ONE  
REMOTE EXCEPTION IS BASIC FOODS WHERE, IT IS IMPLIED, BUT  
NOT SPECIFICALLY STATED, THERE MAY BE GRADUAL INCREASES  
AS ECONOMIC CONDITIONS PERMIT. ATTEMPTS BY SOME (UN-  
SPECIFIED) ORGANIZATIONS TO RAISE PRICES, AND ATTEMPTS BY  
OTHERS TO STOP PRODUCTION OF SOME GOODS, APPARENTLY BE-  
CAUSE PRICES ARE TOO LOW, ARE SHARPLY CRITICIZED AS  
VIOLATIONS OF THE LAW. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE ARE  
EXPLICIT ADMISSIONS THAT KEEPING THE LID ON PRICES,  
MOST OF WHICH HAVE NOT CHANGED APPRECIABLY SINCE GOMULKA  
LEFT OFFICE IN 1971, OR BEFORE, IS A GROWING, ALMOST OVERWHELMING  
ECONOMIC PROBLEM FOR THE POLISH ECONOMY. THE COST OF  
STATE SUBSIDIES, RUNNING INTO BILLIONS OF ZLOTYS, ESCALATES  
MONTHLY. ONE OF THE FIVE SPECIAL WORKING GROUPS SET  
UP IN 1976 TO ANALYZE THE MAJOR PROBLEMS IN POLAND'S  
ECONOMY HAS REPORTED THAT THE "GAP BETWEEN THE COSTS  
OF PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF BASIC FOODS AND THEIR  
RETAIL PRICES IS CONSIDERABLE." HOW CONSIDERABLE?  
THIS IS NOT REPORTED, ALTHOUGH GIEREK  
REFERS TO THE BURDEN OF "HUGE SUBSIDIES FROM THE  
NATIONAL INCOME."

(C) WAGES WILL CONTINUE TO RISE, AND SO WILL PENSIONS  
AND OLD-AGE BENEFITS. GIEREK RECOMMENDS AN INCREASE  
OF 200 ZLOTYS IN THE MINIMUM WAGE EFFECTIVE IN MAY,  
1978, MATCHING A 200 ZLOTY INCREASE IN 1977. THE  
INCREASE OF REAL WAGES AND REAL INCOMES WILL, ACCORD-  
ING TO GIEREK, BE "THE CENTERPIECE OF THE PARTY'S  
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SOCIAL POLICY" THIS YEAR AND THROUGH 1980. FURTHERMORE,  
PERSONAL INCOMES INCREASED BY ABOUT 26 PERCENT IN THE  
TWO-YEAR PERIOD 1976-1977.

(D) INCREASED LABOR PRODUCTIVITY IS STRESSED STRONGLY  
AND REPEATEDLY AS THE KEY ELEMENT FOR SUCCESS IN ACHIEVING  
ALL ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES. IT IS ALSO, IT APPEARS, PRE-

SENTED AS A MAGIC SOLUTION WHICH WILL MAKE THE CONTRA-  
DICTORY POLICIES MENTIONED ABOVE WORK. THE POLICY OF  
INCREASING WAGES, GIEREK SAYS, "SHOULD ESTABLISH  
A CLOSER CONNECTION . . . WITH THE INCREASE IN  
PRODUCTIVITY, AND WITH IMPROVEMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS  
AND QUALITY OF WORK." FOOD PRICES WILL NOT RISE.  
INSTEAD, AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION WILL INCREASE.  
SUBSIDIES ARE ENORMOUS, BUT THERE WILL BE IMPROVED  
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS AND "THE ACTIONS SUPPORT-  
ING AGRICULTURE WHICH WERE ADOPTED AT THE SIXTH  
PLENUM OF THE PARTY ARE BEARING FRUIT.Z THEY ARE,  
APPARENTLY, REGARDED AS THE MAIN WAY OUT OF THE  
JUNGLE.

(E) THE REPORTS OF THE FIVE SPECIAL WORKING GROUPS

ON MAJOR PROBLEMS FACING THE ECONOMY ARE, AS NOTED  
ABOVE, KEPT CONFIDENTIAL. THERE ARE SOME ROUNDABOUT  
COMMENTS, SOME TANTIALIZING IMPLICATIONS, BUT IN  
ESSENCE THE PUBLISHED ""SUMMARIES" OF THE FINDINGS  
OF TOCSE "TEAMS", AS THEY ARE CALLED, ARE REALLY  
LITTLE MORE THAN RESTATEMENTS OF THE PROBLEMS  
AND DEMANDS THAT CORRECTIVE ACTION BE TAKEN.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 WARSAW 0375

(F) THERE ARE NO PROMISES OF RAPID ECONOMIC IMPROVEMENT. THE EARLIEST DATE MENTIONED IS A GOOD TWO YEARS AWAY - 1980. MENTION IS ALSO MADE OF THE PERIOD 1980 THROUGH 1985. GIVEN THE NORMAL DELAYS AND TIME LAGS IN SOCIALIST ECONOMIES, THESE TARGET DATES MUST BE BLEAK NEWS FOR THE POLISH PUBLIC.

(G) REFERENCES TO FOREIGN ECONOMIC RELATIONS CENTER ALMOST ENTIRELY ON INCREASED TRADE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITH THE CEMA AREA, AND PARTICULARLY THE USSR. GIEREK NOTES THE IMPORTANCE OF HARD-CURRENCY EXPORTS, BUT AT THE SAME TIME REFERS TO THE PROBLEMS  
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CAUSED BY ECONOMIC RECESSION AND THE GROWTH OF PROTECTIONISM IN CAPITALIST COUNTRIES.

5. GIEREK'S LONG SPEECH AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CONFERENCE, VIRTUALLY A REPLAY OF THE SPEECH HE MADE AT THE NINTH PLENUM OF THE PARTY IN OCTOBER, CAN BEST BE CLASSIFIED AS AN AMAZING SPECTACLE OF INDECISIVENESS AND INACTION. ONCE AGAIN, AS IN OCTOBER, HE RUNS THROUGH ALL THE PROBLEMS AND INADEQUACIES AND THEN BEGS, PLEADS, DEMANDS, AND IMPLORES THE CITIZENRY TO WORK HARDER, STOP DISOBEYING REGULATIONS, BE MORE UNDERSTANDING OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PROBLEMS, COOPERATE. IT IS POSSIBLE TO FIND A NUMBER OF SEMI-COMIC SITUATIONS WHICH EXEMPLIFY GIEREK'S TONE AND APPROACH: THE SCHOOLTEACHER PLEADING WITH AN UNRULY CLASS TO BEHAVE, THE FARMER TRYING TO STOP CROWS FROM EATING CORN. THE OVERALL IMPRESSION GAINED IS ONE OF HELPLESSNESS FOLLOWED BY ASSURANCES THAT THINGS WILL, EVENTUALLY, PERHAPS IN A FEW YEARS, GET BETTER.

6. IN READING OVER GIEREK'S LONG LIST OF DIFFICULTIES, TWO CHARACTERISTICS SEEM TO OCCUR REPEATEDLY. THE FIRST IS THAT WHENEVER HE REPORTS ON WHAT SEEMS TO BE AN ECONOMIC GAIN, HE IMMEDIATELY NOTES THAT IT IS NOT ADEQUATE FOR CONSUMER DEMAND. THUS

- "MARKET PRODUCTION IS DEVELOPING RAPIDLY . . . BUT WE ARE UNABLE TO ELIMINATE TENSIONS CAUSED BY SHORTAGES OF CERTAIN GOODS ..."

- " WE HAVE ACCLEREATED HOUSING CONSTRUCTION . . . .  
BUT WE ARE UNABLE TO SHORTEN THE WAITING TIME  
FOR APARTMENTS ..."  
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- " IN 1977 WE SUPPLIED 13 BILLION ZLOTYS WORTH OF  
INDUSTRIAL GOODS AND TEN BILLION ZLOTYS WORTH OF  
FOOD ABOVE PLAN .....BUT THESE SUPPLIES FAILED  
TO MEET DEMAND FOR SOME PRODUCT AREAS...."

- " IN THE PAST SEVEN YEARS THERE HAS BEEN INCREASED  
INVESTMENT IN TRANSPORT, RAILWAY CAR STOCKS HAVE  
BEEN MODERNIZED .....BUT FREIGHT CAPACITIES CON-  
TINUE TO FALL SHORT OF REQUIREMENTS....Z

7. THE SECOND IS THE REPEATED USE OF WEAK PHRASEOLOGY  
FOR MAKING DEMANDS, E.G., "IT IS NECESSARY," "WE SHOULD,"  
"WE SHALL HAVE TO," "WE MUST," "MORE ATTENTION MUST BE  
PAID TO.." THERE ARE VITUALLY NO THREATS OR WARNINGS  
CONCERNING WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THESE MILDLY-WORDED  
REQUESTS ARE NOT OBEYED, ALTHOUGH GIEREL DOESN SUGGEST  
THAT "IT SEEMS DESIRABLE" TO ESTABLISH CIVIC CONTROL  
COMMITTIEES ATTACHED TO THE PEOPLE'S COUNCILS.

8. A FEW SAMPLES FROM GIEREK'S LITANY OF PLEADING WILL  
PROVIDE AN ACCURATE PICTURE OF THE ENTIRE SPEECH.  
"THE YEAR 1978 ... SHOULD SEE FURTHER PROGRESS IN THE  
USE OF ARABLE LAND ... EFFORTS SHOULD BE STEPPED UP TO  
INCREASE FERTILITY OF SOIL ....IT IS NECESSARY TO INTENSI-  
FY ACTION TO ENSURE MORE ECONOMICAL USE OF FUELS AND  
ENERGY ...ATTENTION SHOULD BE PAID TO ECONOMY OF  
LIQUID FUELS, ESPECIALLY IMPORTED ONES AND NATURAL  
GAS ... THE SHORTENING OF WORKING HOURS SHOULD DEPEND ON  
A FURTHER GROWTH OF PRODUCTIVITY AND DISCIPLINE ...  
EXISTING RESOURCES ARE NOT ALWAYS USED PROPERLY AND THERE  
IS A WASTE OF TIME AND MATERIALS . . . WE EXPECT TRADE  
ORGANIZATIONS TO BE MORE ACTIVE IN PLACING GOODS ON THE  
MARKET AND MAKING ON-TIME DELIVERIES . . ."

9. R.I.P. ISSIF VISSARIONOVICH\*  
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DAVIES

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## Message Attributes

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**To:** STATE  
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